

A  
COMMENT  
On the  
TIMES,  
OR,  
A CHARACTER  
OF  
The Enemies  
OF THE  
CHURCH.

---

Written by *Thomas Wall*, Mr. in Arts, and  
Minister of Jesus Christ.

---

*London*, Printed for the use and benefit of  
*Thomas Gibbs*, Gent. 1659.

A  
COMMENT  
On the  
TIMES  
OR  
A CHARACTER  
OF  
The Enemies  
OF THE  
CHURCH.

---

Written by Thomas Wells, Minister of Jesus Christ, Mr. in A.D. and

---

London, Printed for the use and benefit of  
Thomas Wells, Gent. 1679



To His  
Most Dear Brother,  
Mr. S. VV.



Let me entitle a Book  
to the name of a  
Brother, is nei-  
ther unusual or  
undecent ; the Primitive  
Fathers more frequently,  
in all Ages some, no less e-  
minent for Piety than  
Learning, have done it ;

A 3 and

## *The Epistle*

and it is good to take example from those who are capable to give it.

As well to relieve my own affections, as to acknowledge your kindness, I Dedicate this to you : I should have been as little satisfied in my self, as shown my self thankful to you, had I made any other choice.

'Tis your acceptance that I crave, and not protection, because it is a dish not agreeable to all Palats : In  
Book-



*Dedictory.*

Book-feasts, men hate those  
that feed on that which  
themselves love not. While  
I would hereby give you a  
testimony of my thankful-  
ness, I would not have it  
prejudicial to its Parent : I  
hope the Author you may  
own, though not the Sub-  
ject. Much of my support  
have I received from you,  
and (to speak in my second  
Religion, gratitude) though  
I should pay all I have, I  
should have all to pay : Tis  
yet my comfort, as God  
hath

*The Epistle &c:*

hath made you a means of  
doing good to me, so he  
hath he made me an instru-  
ment to embalm your  
name. To which I will add  
one grain more, my Pray-  
ers: Beseeching God to bless  
you with the same blessings  
which I beg for the person  
of

Your most affecti-  
onate Brother,

Thomas Wall.

To



TO the READER.

Reader,

**I**F thou art a part of the Subject of this Discourse, thy reduction into the Bosom of the Church is my aim therein; and surely my desires thereunto are very strong, but can lend no help to my endeavors. Arguments can never prevail, where we are resolved to persist. Many men (even with disadvantage)

## To the Reader.

tage) fight with death, because they think they are never truly conquered, who had rather die, then be so; and so make a foolish Bargain with the world, exchanging their lives for reputation. And so many persist in destructive errors, sillily thinking they are never overcome, while themselves do not acknowledge it, and lose the Truth, to save credit: Where then just arguments cannot convince, there is no hopes to reclaim. He, to whom man  
never

## To the Reader.

never spake the like, spake  
yet to no purpose to such men,  
but yet he spake : So holy a  
president secures my at-  
tempt: If thou therefore wilt  
not permit me to benefit thy  
soul, at least give me leave to  
discharge my own. But if  
thou art a Reader, who hast  
as well courage to own the  
truth, as knowledge to discern  
it, let not thy affections to  
read, out-run thy judgement  
in the reading, fully to ob-  
serve the dependence of eve-  
ry sentence with the former,  
may

## To the Reader.

may haply require more then  
perfunctory perusal ; the  
want of a more severe obser-  
vance may be injurious to thy  
self, as well as to me, it may  
be a loss to both. I have sub-  
scribed my name hereunto,  
not that I suppose so mean a  
piece can gain any reputation  
to my name, or my name to it,  
but that my holy Mother  
may take notice she hath one  
son the more, who hath a  
greater zeal to serve her,  
then ability ; who had rather  
discover his weakness, then  
neglect

## To the Reader.

*neglect his duty. If any desire to have a further account of me, I am content to give them this convenient notice, That as there is no tittle in this Treatise either directed or intended against this present Government, so do I profess my self willing to yeild all submissive obedience to it. Among other Arguments wherewith I have satisfied my Conscience for so doing, this is one, For that I do believe it was by a special Divine providence raised up.*  
to

## To the Reader.

to give a stop to the violent and unrighteous actions of these men, who now by an argument taken out of their own mouths, must be forced to confess, That either the designe at which they drove, was wicked, or themselves wicked in the managing of it. *In what I have writ, it is little to me to be judged by men, it is God that judgeth the heart. I expect not success herein from popular noises, but the secret blessing of the same righte-*



To the Reader.

ous God, who knows the integrity of a heart inflam'd with zeal to his glory, and the Churches peace: And if I reclaim none that are fallen, I have my hire, if I can but confirm them that stand.

Farewel.

---

---

To the Reader.  
One God, who knows the in-  
teries of a heart: I would not  
seek to his glory, and the  
Churches peace: And if I  
reclaim none that are fallen,  
I have my hire, if I can but  
confirm them that stand.  
Farewell.



1 Sam. 15. 1, 2, 3. And Samuel said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be King over his people, over Israel: Now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I remember what Amaleck did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came out of Egypt.

Now go and smite Amaleck, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, Infant and suckling, Oxen and Sheep, Camels and Asses.

**T**ime was when Amaleck would have destroyed Israel, Time is now in my Text, when Israel shall destroy Amaleck. Go, and smite Amaleck,

*Amaleck, and all that they have.*

God will revenge the injuries that are done unto his Saints; Anger may sleep, but it cannot die. Though it be four hundred year after, God will call the wicked to account: Their posterity shall be heirs of their curse, as well as of their lands. Whom God hath destined to destruction, he will raise up Instruments to effect his own Decrees: Whom God employs, he will enable them to that piece of service about which he sets them. When God does for man, he expects that man should do for God. The power he gives us, he intends we should employ in his service. If God gives Saul the dignity of a King, 'tis fit that Saul should yeild him the duty of a servant. *And Samuel said unto Saul, God sent me to anoint thee, &c. Now therefore hearken thou to the voice &c.*

These words may be generally dichotomized into two parts.

1. A commemoration of what God hath done for Saul, made him King: And Samuel said unto Saul, God sent me to anoint thee to be King over his people, even Israel.

2. A Declaration of what God would have Saul do for him, in these words, Now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the Lord.

In the commemoration we observe two things; 1. By whose ministrations Saul was made King, by Samuel (saith the Text), And Samuel said unto Saul, God sent me. Secondly, After what manner he was installed in that office, by being Anointed thereunto: God sent me to anoint thee to be King, &c.

In the Declaration of what God would have Saul do for him, we observe three things.

1. The focus of the Injunction, in these words, Now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord.

(4)

bo. The ground of this Injunction, the remembrance of an injury, *I remember what Amalek did to Israel when he came up from Egypt, &c.*

3. The Commission granted in it, *Go and smite Amalek, &c.* The handling of the Text will discover the several branches of each particular. I begin with the first general, a Commemoration of what God had done for Saul, made him King; and therein by whose ministration he was so made, by Samuel's. *And Samuel said, God sent me.*

*God sent me:* It was not so, for Saul was sent to Samuel, and not Samuel to Saul, so we find it 1 Sam. 9. 16.

I answer, Sending does not always imply a local motion, but sometimes a mental direction; God's Prophets are no less said to be sent, when they directed their Prophecies to a place, then when they brought them. It is the delivery of their message, rather than their

(50)

their personal moving, that speaks  
them sent: *I am sent to thee with heavie  
Tydings*, saith the Prophet *Isai* to  
the wife of *Jeroboam* coming to him,  
though the good old man moved nei-  
ther from his house nor seat, so we  
read, *1 Kings 14. 6*.

So is *Samuel* here said to be sent to  
anoint *Saul*, not so much in reference  
to any external motion, as to that pro-  
phetique instinct, wherby he was  
commanded to anoint *Saul* when he  
came unto him. But *Saul* in coming  
to *Samuel* to receive his Royal Uncti-  
on, Expositors upon my Text say  
was a Type of wicked and ambitious  
men, seeking after the outward ho-  
nour and dignity of the world. From  
whence note.

They that are least worthy of ho-  
nour, are commonly most desirous  
of it, and seek after that honour which  
the more deserving accepts not of,  
without being sought unto.

Never had pride so much worth,  
 as true worth has humility. There is  
 no dignities so high, which ambition  
 makes not the mark of its own merit:  
 no advancement so mean, which hu-  
 mility thinks not to over-balance its  
 desert. Every one thinks himself wor-  
 thy of that honour whereunto he  
 aspires; yea therefore aspires to it, be-  
 cause he thinks himself worthy of it.  
 Lucifer could not be chief among  
 the Angels, but he will also be as high  
 as God himself: *Eron Alwiffman*, I  
 will be like the most High, *Isa. 14. 13*.  
*Behold, O Lucifer, thousands of Angels*  
*minister unto him, and ten thousand stand*  
*before him*: While all the rest are  
 standing, Lucifer must needs be sit-  
 ting; I will sit in the Mount of the Con-  
 gregation, *Isa. 14. 14*. O Lucifer! If  
 thou hadst any priority of order, thou  
 hadst none of Nature; if thou hadst  
 higher endowments than thy fellows,  
 yet but the same identity of Being: If  
 thou



thou wert chief in the service of God,  
yet not exempted from it : For, *Are  
they not all made ministering Spirits ?*  
so saith St Paul, Heb. 1. 14. O proud  
and ambitious spirit ! Hadst thou ra-  
ther be without God, then under him ?  
Hadst thou rather be chief in hell, then  
not as chief in heaven ? Know then,  
that thou shalt be rumbled into hell,  
*Iso. 14. 15.* And he that would sit in  
a Throne by himself, Judge of his  
own Angels excellency, shall stand  
before men to be judged for his Di-  
vels contumacy ; so saith St Paul,  
*Know ye not that we shall judge the An-  
gels ?* 1 Cor. 6. 3.

But let me draw down your  
thoughts from heaven to earth : None  
of *Gideons* sons so much affected So-  
veraign Power over Israel as *Abime-  
lech*, not younger then his brethren so  
much in years, as in worth : The  
name of Judge was enough for his  
valiant father ; nothing but the Title

of King would suit with his ambition, *Judg. 9. 2.* None before him usurped Sovereign power over Israel, none that came after him was less worthy of it: He was illegitimate in his birth, but execrable in his actions. The blood of seventy of his Brethren must seal the Crown faster to his head.

*Absolon* too, thought he had had as much worth as beauty, his Father's crown would better beset his head, which yet had more hair than wit: There is no wit against the counsel of God, who had design'd Israel's crown for a wiser head; so we read *2 Sam. 7. 13.* But what say we next to the Scribes and Pharisees, of whom our Saviour says, *That they love to sit in the chief places in the Synagogues, Mar. 23. 6.* If their sitting there did become their gravity, sure I am, their love to sit there did betray their vanity. These are those ambitious affections which are figured in *Satan*, in coming (though

unwillingly) to receive his holy Uo-  
 ction; which is the second thing ob-  
 served in this first general; the man-  
 ner how he was enstated into this So-  
 veraigne Office, by being anointed  
 thereunto with oyl: *God sent me to a-  
 noint thee to be King, &c.*

As the Office of a King doth enstate  
 him with power, for the administrati-  
 on of Justice, so his anointing to that  
 Office with Oyl, which is ever held for  
 a Type of mercy, doth admonish him  
 to exercise that power with lenity and  
 mercy.

Hence Note, That the very acts of  
 Justice, must be tempered with Mer-  
 cy; and the rigour of the one, miti-  
 gated with the lenity of the other. Pu-  
 nishments must not take their measure  
 from that guilt which did occasion  
 them. The Father of mercies may  
 be our soul-melting president in this  
 particular. The very Devils are not  
 tormented so much as they deserve.  
 For

For why should we limit the power of his wrath? Wo, and wo, would be the damned in hell, if mercy were confin'd to heaven and earth; yea even in hell does his mercy triumph over his justice, and abates of the measure of their deserved pains, though not of the continuance.

But let us more safely adore the temporal acts of his Justice: Here mercy I am sure interposes, not more willing to mitigate our deserved punishments, then unwilling to inflict what he does; so saith the Prophet, *Lam. 3. 33.* The grief which he takes at the misery of men, shews his unwillingness to proceed against them; for, *his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel*, saith the Text, *Judg. 10. 16.* as if he that did afflict, were no less affected then the people that were afflicted. So violent is the heat of this holy contention between his mercy and his justice, that it kindles repent-  
ings

ings in him: *My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together: Hos. 11. 8.* As if the Prophet should have said, Justice can no sooner get a resolution of vengeance, but in comes mercy, and turns performing into repenting; and repenting, into forgiving: but lo justice provoked by man's continuance in sin, returns, and assisted by truth, begets another repenting of that forgiving; and then the sentence of judgement is given forth; according as it is written, *Within forty days, and Nineve shall be destroyed*; when lo before it can be executed, it is revoked; his heart turns within him, and the turning of his heart, stays his hand.

Nay more, when Justice does prevail, and God does punish, mercy triumphs even in that justice: Because Justice will not turn it self into mercy, mercy will turn it self into justice; and that which was justice in the punishment, becomes mercy in the amend-

ment that is wrought by being punished. Even the acts of justice shall serve to set forth the power of mercy in their happy effects. How many that had run to the very gates of hell in their prosperity, have been brought home again by adversity, and set in their right way again to heaven. God exerciseth his justice, that he may make way for his mercy: 'Tis our benefit he intends by punishing, and not our ruine. This mercy then which God doth exercise in and among his works of justice, is a divine rule for all earthly Potentates to walk by, signified in my Text to *Saul* by the oyl, (an embleme of mercy) wherewith he was anointed to that Kingly Office: *God sent me to anoint thee to be King over his people, over Israel: Now therefore hearken thou to the voice of the words of the Lord, &c.* which is the second general, A Declaration of what God would have *Saul* do for him, wherein

we

we have first the form of the Injunction, *Now therefore hearken thou, &c.*

Wherein each word hath its weight. *Now, Now therefore: Now therefore hearken thou: Now therefore hearken thou* (not to the words, but) *to the voice of the words of the Lord.*

*Now.* This particle *Now*, hath a peculiar Emphasis; as if he should have said, *O Saul! Thou didst sin before in offering up forbidden sacrifice, cap. 13. 9. thy detraction from the Throne of Israel was threatned then, Now therefore take heed, offend no more, but hearken to.* Note hence.

Present obedience may revoke that judgement, which reiteration of sin may make inevitable.

If God's [*Now*] be not observed, man's [*Now*] may either never come, or come too late. *Eſau* may shed tears for the loss of his blessing, but together with his blessing, he doth but lose his tears; for, *he found no place for repentance*

repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears, saith St Paul, Heb. 12. 17. There is a promise made to unfeigned penitence, but there is none made for it.

Some say the Devils should be saved, if they would, or could repent; but there can be no ground for that assertion: and my reason is, for that repentance can expiate no sin, for which God hath not better satisfaction in the death of Christ, and Christ died not for the Devils. That repentance which is built upon faith is a personal application of Christs merit, is only saying, and this repentance is given only unto Abraham's children, whose seed the Redeemer of the world took. But what difference is there between men and devils, if the devils cannot expiate their sins by repentance, and men will not? They are less abhorred than neither do nor can, then they that can, and do not: If therefore the devils  
neither



neither can repent, nor if they did, could be saved by it, they are then worse then divels who may repent, and may be saved by it, and yet will not but continue in sin. We may sin as men, but if we do not desist from it as Christians, we cannot persevere in it but as divels: Sad is their condition, and full of horreur, whose hearts are not smitten with their sins, as well as their ears, whose resolutions are not convinced, as well as their consciences: It were better for these to have died soon in their sin, then to have lived longer to it, they may be a little longer in hell, but they would be a great deal less tormented; for in living to fulfil the measure of their iniquity, they do but treasure up wrath against the day of wrath: Who sees not then the danger (I say) not so much of falling into sin, as in lying in it. It is just with God to deny repentance to them, when it is begg'd, who wilfully neglect

lect it when it is proffered. It is just  
 that they that run on in sin without  
 care, should die without cure. Nor is it  
 less difficult for the Leopard to change his  
 spots, then the Æthiope his skin. I mean by the  
 Leopard (which is a beast speckled with  
 the different spots of white and black)  
 that kind of sinner that is neither con-  
 stant in good nor bad, but sometimes  
 white, by retracting of his sins, som-  
 times black, by re-adding, and falling  
 back into the same. By the Æthiope,  
 who is wholly black, I mean that sin-  
 ner which goes on and perseveres in  
 sin. Though there be the same diffi-  
 culty for either to recover out of their  
 sins, yet there may be difference in the  
 condition of the sinner; for recidua-  
 tion into sin, is worse then continu-  
 ance; for it is no marvel, if they that  
 never felt the horrour of sin, can con-  
 tinue in it; if they that have, can re-  
 turn unto it: If they found no horror  
 in

in sin, why did they forsake it? If they did, why do they repeat it? If the first acts of sin struck any terror, what a work will the reiteration make in the conscience? If one devil at first could so disturb the soul, that it could never rest; till he had been cast out, and its self been swept with the besome of mortification, and garnished with many Christian graces, what confusion will he, with the addition of seven more worse then himself, make in the soul if he returns? *It is better never to have known the way of righteousness, then after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment. 2. Pet. 2. 21.* If it were not wicked to consult with Witches, why did Saul destroy them? If it were, why did he afterward seek unto them? Surely his former destroying them, is set down, to note his greater impiety in his after seeking unto them. Knowledge of sin, heightens the guilt of the sinner; and reiteration

B

ration, both the guilt and judgement of known sins. And therefore *sin no more* (saith our Saviour) *lest a worse thing happen to you.* God easily forgets our past sins, if the addition of more makes him not remember and recal them: But if they do, he deals with us, as some mothers with their children, call them to a reckoning for all together: Which *Samuel* does here emphatically insinuate in my Text, by this particle *Now.* *Saul* was before for his disobedience threatened the rejection from his Kingdom; which sentence present obedience may revoke. *Now therefore hearken.* Which brings me to the next term of weight, the illative particle [*therefore*] *Now therefore*; as if *Samuel* should have said, O King! God hath done for thee, now therefore thou must do for God. The Note that I observe from hence is this.

There is nothing more pleasing than a pious gratitude.

Obliga-

Obligations and transgressions are proportionable. By how much the more we are bound to serve God, by so much the more vile we are if we do it not. The foresight of our sins, and abuse of them, cannot stop the current of God's present favours: but these favours which do not prevent sin, do aggravate it. *Go up* (saith God to Moses) *thou and the people*; the vulgar translation renders it, *Tu, & populum tuum*. Thou, and thy people; and the following words render it the more probable, where God ascribes their education from Egypt also unto Moses; *whom thou hast brought up out of Egypt*, Exod. 33. 1. But how comes Israel, whom God had in so many relative and respective terms appropriated to himself, how come they on the sudden to be *Moses his people*, and charge? Surely *Moses his prayers* (who was also the Mediator of the Law) which only preserved them a people;

B 2

made

made them his people: Now God will no longer be the God of his people, then they are the people of their God: Nor would he go up with them himself, but there was a mystérie in the reason, *I will not go up, lest I should destroy them*, Exod. 33. 3. But yet he would send an Angel with them: but what do I read? Will not God go up lest he should destroy them? And yet will he send an Angel? What shall we say then? Is there more mercy in an Angel, then in God? God forbid, Not more mercy in an Angel, but less danger to the people; for that high favour, and holy benefit of his divine presence, would but heighten their sin, and at once both hasten and aggravate their judgement: It is mercy to the wicked to withdraw his temporal mercies from them; because those benefits which do not more excite men to serve the Lord, doth the more excite God to punish the men. He will  
 measure

measure out a portion of wrath, answerable to his abused favours: And in this respect an Angel's conduct was more safe for a rebellious people, than God's.

The punishment must be proportionable to the sin: To speak morally, there can be no sin more odious to God than ingratitude, because all his favours are wholly undeserved. Those favours deserve most of us, of which we are least deserving. Can we challenge any interest in the God of love, when that love of God which hath done so much for us, cannot persuade us to do what we can for God? Are his benefits so much above the ability of our deserving? And shall our desert be below the ability of our performing? 'Tis true, we are not able to pay so much obedience as we owe; yet let us not owe what we are able to pay: But make *Samuel's* Ergo in my Text, become our too in resolution,

and resolve it thus in our selves: many are the blessings which we have received from God, and therefore we will hearken to the voice of his words. Which brings me from the illative particle, *Therefore*, to the personal, *Thou*. Now therefore hearken thou, even thou O King! Thou that art honoured with Royal Dignity, though others less endeared, less indebted, may fail of their duty, yet do not thou, *Hearken thou*. The Note is this.

The highest preheminance calls for the exactest obedience. For, *Men are better taught by the eye than the ear, and are brought to practise sooner by imitation than perswasion, and do rather follow the instructor, than his instructions.* God commanded *Abraham* to offer up *Isaac*. not to try his obedience, but to prove it. God did not want experience, but posterity example. *Abraham* had been unworthy to be the father of the faithful,



ful, if he had not left his children an example of his obedience, as well as precept.

2. Eminency of place calls for obedience; as first, for being example of good to others: so secondly, for controuling evil in others. They only may justly reprove a sin, which may not justly be reprov'd for it. *Otherwise wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy self,* saith St Paul. They carry (like *Urias*) the letters of his own death, the sentence of their own condemnation, that prescribe that obedience which they do not practise. Nor are they more pernicious to themselves then others; for in that they pull down by their lives, what they build up by their lines; while men are more ready to follow their example, then instruction; they do but make the people also more knowing to their greater destruction.

3. It is not only, either for exam-

ple, or for liberty of controuling evil in others, that requires obedience in men of eminency; but also out of gratitude to God. He is unworthy to be master of a family, who is not the most godly in it; nor they either of Civil or Ecclesiastical honour, whom sanctity doth not more adorn then their dignity: The diuel would not part with honour to Christ, without doing homage for it; and shall God to man? Or rather, would the diuel have worship done to him for his fained promises, and shall not God for real performances. God gave man dominion over all his works, and writ his Sovereignty in the maiesty of his countenance, but sealed his donation with a precept of obedience; man broke the Seal, and made the Writing of no validity. The Government both of heaven and earth was given to Christ, but even he too must bear it upon his shoulders, *Isa. 9. 6.* that is, he

he must submit to the Law, and to the will of God, in dying for the sins of men; For so it is written, *In the volumn of thy book, that I should do thy will, O God: Yea, I am content to do it: and so became obedient unto death, the death of the Cross: And for this cause, God hath exalted him, and given him a name above all names; Phil. 2. 9* Exaltation is ever either the reward of obedience, or else the condition. *Saul* had done no remarkable service of obedience, why he should be made King, yet he was made King, that he might do it. *God sent me to anoint thee to be King; Now therefore hearken thou to the voice of the words: He does not say to the Word of the Lord, as if it were spoken but now; but hearken to the voice of the words of the Lord, because there were formerly several words, or divine oracles, as Exod. 17. 14. Dent. 25. 17. which did enjoyne upon Israel this piece of service, which was referred*

ved, for a tryal of *Saul's* obedience. The observation hence is this.

The more often and earnestly Precepts are pressed in holy Writ, the greater care is required in performing them, and the heavier judgement incurr'd in neglecting them.

The dignity of the person that commands, makes the breach of the smallest precept no small offence; how then will he be observed in his more severe edicts? Take an instance.

What command is more often, and with greater protestation and zeal commended to our practise, then an holy observation of the Sabbath? What precept violated with greater rigour of punishment, *Adam* did not more slightly forfeit heaven then his posterity do eagerly pursue the earth. Heaven being lost, which only can satisfie the desires of men, the world is only affected, which never can. Even innocent *Adam* must till the ground,

ground, Gen. 2. 15. but *in sorrow must*  
*beget thereof*, as the curse of his sin,  
 Gen. 3. 17. And yet, the sinful sons  
 of Adam, as if they would recompence  
 the loss of heaven, with the gain of  
 the world, by a piece of the devil's  
 Chymistry, turn their necessity into  
 delight, and make their curse their  
 blessing; with such sweet content pier-  
 cing themselves thorow with many  
 sorrows, while they will be rich, 1 Tim.  
 6. 10. though they forfeit for it, truth,  
 honesty, grace, heaven, yea and Jesus  
 Christ. For this cause, God foresee-  
 ing the propension of man's will, allu-  
 red with the false beauty of temporal  
 felicity, would be wholly addicted to  
 heap up these earthly treasures, and  
 find no leisure for heavenly employ-  
 ments, bound us to the obedience of  
 this command, with a more frequent  
 pressing it, and by threatening the vio-  
 lation thereof with unavoidable  
 death.

Remark-

Remarkable is the story of the man that gathered sticks on the Sabbath day; remarkable, not so much in regard of the punishment that was inflicted, but in regard of them that did inflict that punishment: *And let all the people stone him with stones, Numb 15. 35.* Not some, but all the people: Every one must have a stone to sling at the offender, that so every one might learn not to transgress that Law, the breach whereof themselves had been the punishers. If the terror of the death might affright them, their own hands dipt in the offenders blood might make them no less ashamed, then afraid to commit that sin which themselves had so severely punished.

As in this case of the Sabbath, so in all other crimes may the proposition hold; that a more sharp chastisement is due to them, whom a more often pressing doth not excite to a more strict obedience: which that *Samuel* might

might gain from *Saul*, he minds him of former words, wherein this service was commanded, *Hearken not to the word, but to the voice of the words of the Lord.*

*Thus saith the Lord.*

Whom the new Testament calls the God of peace, in the Old, was stiled the Lord of Hosts. The whole Creation, Men, Angels, and the other creatures, are God's armies, sent forth to subdue his enemies: *The very Stars in their course fight against Siserá, Judg. 5.* God is called thus and thus, according to his several attributes: His Attributes are distinguished in the notion of men, by their proper actions; from these attributes producing actions answerable each to the same, are these Titles derived. Thus great and miraculous actions, speaks him a God of power. Acts of punishment, a just God. Acts of grace, a God of mercy: and Acts of victory, the Lord of Hosts,

Hells, from whom *Satan* here brought a Commission; *Thou saidst the Lord of Hells*. And what was that?

*I remember what Amalek did*. I remember. Whence note.

*All the actions of the wicked are recorded in the book of God's remembrance.* Penitently to remember our own sins, is the readiest way to abolish them. The sight of this serpent cures the sting. Because the Saints sets their sins before their face, God casts them behind his back, God will not hereafter afflict them for their sins, whom their very sins do here afflict. If hell were appointed for sinners, yet not for those who make their sins as an hell to them; as he did who prayed, O bring my soul out of hell! that is, from the face of sin.

'Tis contrary with the wicked, they forget God, and with him, the sins they commit against him: Some wash away the remembrance of their sins in their



their drunken Bowls, as did *Balthazar*, *Dan. 5*. Some feast away the remembrance of them, in luxurious riot, so did *Dives*, *Luke 15*. Some fiddle away the remembrance of them, so did they in *Job*, *They take the Tabret and the Harp, and delight in the sound of the Organ*, *Job 21. 12*. Some sport away all thoughts of sin, *They spend their days in mirth, and in a moment go down to death*, *Job 21. 13*. Some bury the remembrance of sin in their worldly cares, so do the greedy *Misers* of the earth. Some choak the remembrance of them with a false hope, that God himself takes no notice of them, *Tush, say they, Doth God perceive it? Is there knowledge in the most high?* Yes, desperate sinner, God doth see them, he records them all, and in his time of vengeance, will remember it too. *I remember what Amaleck did.*

Why did the Angel go about Jerusalem in the appearance of a man, with

a Writers Inkborn by his side, Ezek. 9. 17. but to note, that if he did not according to the Letter of the Text, write down all their sins, yet so signify they were as certainly remembered as if they were.

All holy and divine Attributes make up but one God. All the operations of those attributes, tend but to accomplish one infinite Will, and terminates in glorifying him. His glory is incomprehensible, and so are the ways whereby he doth promote it. Those ways which are most unlikely in the apprehension of man, do most advance that glory. Nothing did more startle the faith of the ancient Prophets, then the prosperous success of the wicked: *Why doth the way of the wicked prosper? Why are they in wealth that rebelliously transgress?* cries Jeremiah, cap. 12. 2. *Why doth the wicked oppress the man that is more righteous then himself?* is the complaint of Habakuk

*bakuk*, cap. 1. 13. as if they should say, Can God be jealous for his glory, and let them prosper so, who thus pollute it? Is God righteous that takes vengeance on the wicked? Shall man glory in his wickedness, and shall God sit down with the dishonour they do unto his name thereby? But cease, O man, whose breath is in thy nostrils, is the reward of thy faith so far above thine understanding, and must the trial of it be only in things below it?

Does the wisdom of God infinitely surmount thine apprehension, & must the proceedings thereof be only limited to it? If God be God, be thou a man. Canst thou search into the secrets of his mercy, which with-holds the present execution of his justice, in expectation of repentance? Think not that mercy too great, which had it been less then infinite (and so above the apprehension of a finite creature) had left thee wholly to justice? Canst

C

thou

thou search into the secrets of his justice; which raiseth glory to it self out of abused mercy? Think not his justice too slow, which had it been more speedy, had cut thee off (thou best of men) from the benefit of mercy. Dost thou see a man fling the Ordinances of God, and pass by his gracious call with neglect and scorn, to outbrave his conscience with a bold admittance of any sin, to aggravate his sin with hateful circumstances, in contempt of goodness, to be a graduate in ungraciousness, and to wallow in his uncleanness; as if he were as void of fear, as he is of grace; as if he were as far from judgement, as he is from remorse. O the dreadful, and no less secret effects of divine justice. Present impunity makes this man secure, security more outrageous: *Because judgement is not speedily executed on the wicked, therefore are the hearts of the children of men set on mischief,* saith the Scripture.

Scripture. It was *Eves* impunity (if I dare suppose it) more then her example, that induced *Adam* to eat the forbidden fruit, He saw her eat that morsel which God had forbidden her, but he did not see her die, as God had threatened her. Me-thinks I hear *Adam* thus reasoning within himself: If the injunction were laid upon her as well as me, why should the penalty be inflicted on me, and not upon her? I may wel hope I shall not die for eating that, which I see her eat, and live. If *Abel* had died for murdering *Arnon*, he had never rose out of his grave in rebellion against his Father. The wicked fear not that vengeance which they presently feel not, till they suddenly feel what they feared not. Because God winks at the sins of the ungodly, they think he is blind, and sees them not: Because they mind not God's judgments, they think God minds not their sins: They remember not God's judgments,

ments because he defers them, and God defers them, because he would more severely remember them. *I remember what Amaleck did*, which is the next point; wherein two things.

1. What *Amaleck* was?

2. What he did?

1. What *Amaleck* was? He was the posterity of *Esau*, the brother of *Jacob*, who was father to Israel, to whom *Amaleck* did this wroag.

The first opposition then which Israel received, was from their cosin Germans. To have been the ringleaders of mischief, is no small aggravation of the crime: The example is as bad as the crime. Every one may serve to set forward a mischief, which hath neither skill nor courage to attempt it. What shall Israel expect from the Amorite a stranger, that is first injured by *Amaleck* a brother? To receive hurt from them which ought to help, is a double injury. No bonds of Nature

ture can restrain the mischievous proceedings of bloody men. Self-interest, and envie, know no difference of persons, but oftentimes produceth the bitterest enmity between the nearest allies, as here between Israel and Amaleck: But if the Law of Nature had link'd Amaleck to Israel, the collection of grace had appropriated Israel to God. Israels natural relation to Amaleck, did aggravate Amalecks injury to Israel; Israels spiritual relation to God, shall heighten God's revenge against Amaleck, for that injury done to his Israel. *I remember what Amaleck did to Israel.* And what was that? *He laid wait for him in the Wilderness, as he came up out of Egypt.*

*He laid wait for him.*

The wicked want nothing but opportunity to do mischief; What they cannot effect by force, they will endeavour by fraud. Amaleck is a true Metatype of the devil, whose subtlety

must prevail more than his power. The diuel may roar like a Lyon, but he cannot hurt; he may seek to devour, but cannot assure it: Not what he will, but what he is permitted, is done by him: yet his malice shall still feed his hope. The diuel may as well cease to be, as not do like one. Though it be to his greater confusion in disappointment, he will yet attempt; and hopes to facilitate that by his treachery, which he cannot by his strength.

Of him it was Amaleck learn'd to lay wait for Israel as he came out of Egypt. For no sober man a soul go forth in resolution and endeavour, from the Egypt of the world, to the Canaan of heaven, but that infernal Amalekite lays snares to entrap it.

He that could not endure that man should continue in the state of innocency, does with greater despite behold his return unto it. It is a greater vexation to be foyle'd by a foe  
over-



overthrown before, and whets the desire to a more hopeful encounter. If one diuel be expell'd, he will seek to regain his possession, with the assistance of seven more. *Pharaoh* cannot endure that *Israel* should serve a greater Lord then himself, nor the diuel a better. *Pharaoh* thinks them strait idle in his service, if they have any leisure to think of serving another, and will encrease their tasks, to diuert their thoughts. No sooner could *Gideon* make peace with *Jeshua*, but all his neighbour Kings make war against him: No sooner can a soul enter into a peace with God, by holy resolutions of amendment, but the diuel strait attempts to corrupt the affections thereof; love of gain, fear of scotts, desire of pleasures, in a joynt conspiracy work together, to break off those resolutions. *I am the Lord thy God*, so begins the Law; but while this Law was writing, the diuel stirred up the

people to force *Aaron* to make them a golden god : While the true God was writing them a Law, they made a Law to set up a false God. The diuel did hope God would hold them unworthy of his holy Law, that had not the patience to stay the writing of it.

Nor seeks he more to deprive us of the helps of piety, then to hinder the encrease. It is the sad complaint of many a poor soul, that they never meet with more occasions to call them aside, then on those days which precedent intentions had devoted more solemnly with fasting and prayer to humble their souls before their God. Holy purposes, if deferred, are likely lost: But its a false necessity that crosses that *unum necessarium* of *Mary*, which is the only true one, what ever occasion it is, or outward necessity, that diuerts us from our holy purposes, it is but an Amalekite that lies in wait by the way as thou goest from Egypt,

to

to thy heavenly Canaan, thou must subdue it ; thou must destroy it in this spiritual warfare, as here *Saul* was in this temporal ; *Go and smite Amaleck, and all that they have* : which is the last thing, The Commission granted from the Lord of Hosts : Wherein see

First the matter of it, *Destroy Amaleck*.

Secondly, The extent of it. 1. Generally, *All that they have*. 2. Particularly, *Man and Woman*, i.e. of all states, degrees, and conditions, Infants and Sucklings, Beasts and all.

The Observation hence is this.

Divine vengeance knows no difference of persons, spares neither the high for their state, nor the weaker for their Sex, nor the young for their non-age, nor the very beasts for their want of reason, which makes them in themselves incapable of sinning.

1. Not the high for their state. No outward dignity can be priviledged from

from impunity : nay, the dignity of the person, adds to the indignity of the crime, and makes him obnoxious to the greater judgement : The reason given, is, Because the sins of the great are exemplary. Great men, if sinners, are like to the devil, who with his tail drew down the third part of the stars with him, *Rev.* 12.4. Who ever knew an holy Court, and a wicked Prince ? Or to speak neerer to our selves, who ever knew a vertuous family, and a profane master ? His plenty corrupts him, and he the rest. They are afraid to appear good, if he upon whom they depend hates to be so : They think he will hate them too, if they be not like unto him. A bad example is sooner followed, then a good one : It is this in Governours, whether publique or private, that maintains sin in the world, which it at once both secures, and feeds. Men think they may safely do that, which they see those practise

Aise, who ought to punish it. It is the  
 just retribution of God, that if they  
 who ought, do not punish sin, should  
 be more severely punished for it; they  
 attract the guilt of many, by whom  
 many are made guilty; All shall suffer  
 for their own sins, but he shall suffer  
 as much as many, whose example  
 made many sinners. How justly did  
*Dives* fear the augmentation of his  
 own, by his brothers coming into the  
 same torments, whose example might  
 bring them to it: With what bitterness  
 did he entertain the thoughts of their  
 coming to encrease his flames, which  
 he already found so intolerable? How  
 much better had it been for him to  
 have begg'd his bread with *Lazarus*  
 on earth, then to beg water of him in  
 hell?

V What a corrasive must it needs be  
 to the penitent soul of *David*, to hear  
*Nathan* say, *Thou hast made the enemies*  
*of the Lord to blaspheme?* O holy *Da-*  
*vid!*

*vid!* I have heard thee sometimes say,  
 Thou wouldst destroy all the wicked  
 of the Land? Shall those wicked now  
 learn by thee to be more vile? That  
 thou which hast so often sang praises  
 to the name of God, shouldest cause  
 others to blaspheme that name! For  
 what will they say? Is this the servant  
 of the God of Israel? Can that Law  
 of God be an holy Law, whose chief  
 Professors commit such unholy acts?  
 Such needs must be the Law, as the  
 lives of them that do embrace it do  
 declare, Men sure are such as they are  
 taught to be: If their God were holy,  
 his people would be holy too; he can-  
 not well be good, that hath such wick-  
 ed servants. If great men therefore  
 be greater examples of impiety, a  
 greater measure of punishment must  
 be their due, which divine justice will  
 surely pay.

Indeed it is no less requisite that the  
 Divine nature should be incapable of  
 sinning,

finning, then impossible for it to be subject to it: for if it be necessary that sin should be punished, it is as necessary, that it should be punished by him who cannot sin. VVhere there is subjection to a capacity of sinning, there can be no certainty of immunity from falling into it: where there is no necessity of immunity from it, there can be no necessity of punishing it; for how shall any (especially eternally) punish that, whereof himself may possibly be guilty, if he should be subject to it?

Hence it is, that neither men nor Angels can punish sin; a derivative power they have, but not a primitive, they may have it from God, but not from themselves; they may be executioners of punishment, but not imposers. The Elect Angels indeed, and beatified Saints cannot sin; but they have this happiness by their confirmation in Christ,  
and

and not by the soundness of their own nature : The one have sinned while they were here, the other might have done even there.

To God then only it belongs to punish sin, not only as it is committed against him, but as it is he that could not possibly have sinned. And now to bring it home, as he is God, and cannot sin, and therefore only may, so as he is God, he cannot but punish sin, and therefore will, in whomsoever he finds it. *He spared not the Angels,* saith S. Jude : It sin seizeth upon the nature of Angels, the nature of Angels shall be subjected even to actual torments for that sin : As it is written, *Go ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* And as a worthy light of our Church saith, *In vain were that light prepared for the Devil, if the Devil's nature could not be tormented in it.* But as for us men, God did more to redeem us, then he did to make



make us. If then God spared not the Angels, which sinned only against their creation, how much less will he not spare man that sinneth against so great redemption, *treading under foot the Son of God; as if the blood of the Covenant, wherewith we were sanctified, were an unholy thing.* Heb. 10. 29. Again, If he spared not the Angels for their heavenly excellency, much less will he spare man for his earthly dignity; whom their impiety of life doth condemn, their eminency of place shall not absolve. 'Tis the works of men that God accepts, and not their persons. He that would not accept of a crown for himself, will never accept of another for it. For, *Tophet is prepared of old, even for the King is it prepared,* Isa. 30. ult. And so hateful was *Saul's* partiality in this respect, that for sparing the King of Amaleck, he lost the Kingdom of Israel, if not of heaven to himself. Thus you see, first  
he

he spares not the high for their state.

Secondly, Not the weaker for their Sex : Slay man and woman too.

Women. The original matter of woman, whereof she was composed, was more pure then that of man, yet was the woman first in the transgression, and not the man. Before their fall, she was an help meet for him, not subject to him ; but after her fall, lest she should abuse that equality which she had before, to the like seducement, she must submit to the dominion of her husband, *Gen. 3. 16.* That as in her equality she first induced him to sin, whereby he merited eternal death, so in her subjection, she should be obnoxious to the penalty of his sin, even to a temporal death ; and therefore slay man, yea and woman too.

Thirdly, He spares not the young for their nonage. Such as are the Parents, such usually are the children ; not that the very sins of the Parents are

are by nature transfused into the children, but do insensibly seat upon them, by being daylie inured to them, which at length by custome turns to another nature. It is therefore just with God, to root the whole race of them, whom he foresees will be inheritors of their fathers enmity against his Church. So *Noah* about to curse his Son *Cham*, pronounced not the curse in the name of *Cham*, but *Canaan* his sons son.

*Noah* by a prophetique spirit foresaw *Canaan* would be heir of his Fathers sin, and therefore subjected him to his fathers curse. Nay, righteous *Jonathan* must be dispossessed for his fathers disobedience. Gods judgments are always deep and secret, but ever just: He takes away the righteous young for their greater good, he takes away the wicked young for their lesser torment, and therefore slay man, woman, yea infant and suckling too.

*Oxen and Sheep, &c.*

It is the endowment of reason that gives a capacity of sinning: The creature is void of reason, and therefore free from sin, yet must be slain. The unreasonable creature, though in it self void of sin, yet in detestation of the sinner whom it serves, is made obnoxious to temporal punishment. If the diuel in the serpent induce *Eve* to sin, the instrument is cursed, in hatred of the sin occasioned by it. In the destruction of the old world by the universal deluge, why should the beasts, creeping things, and fowls of the Air, perish by the waters, but because they received their food from that earth wherein man had corrupted their ways *Gen. 6. 7.* As therefore Beasts in general cannot sin, yet subjected to the curse of man's sin; so neither in particular had these Amalekitish cattle any hand in the offence done to the Israel, yet must be destroyed for their owners

owners sakes, who had. So severe is  
God's vengeance against the enemies  
of his Church, even total destruction,  
both of them and theirs. In God's due  
time Amalecks portion shall be theirs.  
Even so, O Lord, let all thy enemies  
perish, that thy Church may have rest,  
*Amen.*

---

*FINIS,*

---